

Goan to relish passion for bird watching in USA



FEATHER FRIENDLY: Aidan Fonseca and one of the many winged wonders he has captured on camera



Paul Fernandes | TNN

Panaji: Just over ten days from now, a 15-year-old Goan lad will be relishing his passion for bird watching in the 230-acre bird sanctuary, Sapsucker Woods in New York with 15 other young birders from across the world.

Aidan Fonseca, now studying Standard 10 in Pune, is among two Indian students chosen with 14 others from Guatemala, Canada and eight states across the United States of

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America (USA) to attend the annual young birders event in Ithaca, state of New York, USA.

"Aidan has been selected by Cornell university's (an Ivy League institution) Cornell Lab of Ornithology for the five-day event from July 10 to 14, 2014," said his father, Savio Fonseca, an amateur birder. Taksh Sangwan from New Delhi is the other Indian participant.

The Panaji-based Fonseca family is excited about the lucky break. The high profile event promises an opportunity for talented youth with a passion for birds and an ambition to make ornithology their career to interact with successful professionals in the field.

"The participants will meet and interact with ornithological researchers, tour leaders, audio specialists and computer scientists," Fonseca explained.

Fonseca who has travelled with his father to a few well-known bird sanctuaries appears to have caught the passion for shooting birds on his trip to Kashmir. "He was 11 then and returned with lots of pictures of birds," his father added.

"The organizers informed us that Aidan's essay on how he got into birding and his application stood out from a number of top-notch applications," Fonseca said.

The participants will also be taken on a tour of the Cornell Lab, a reputed ornithological research institution in the world, Macaulay Library and the museum of vertebrates. The field trip at the crack of dawn to the bird sanctuary attached to the campus is expected to be a major highlight of the trip. The protected area covers forests, ponds, ferny swamps, and abundant wildlife. "More than four miles of trails and boardwalks are waiting for you to explore," states the institution's website.

His parents are hoping his ambition to pursue a career in ornithology will remain steadfast. "The trip to Cornell University will be a big boost to encourage him further," Fonseca said.